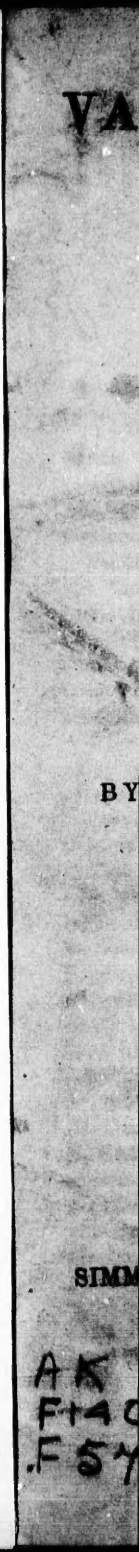
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VANCOUVER'S ISLAND,

THE

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY,

AND THE

GOVERNMENT.

BY JAMES EDWARD FITZGERALD, ESQ.

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VANCOUVER'S ISLAND,

&c.

Since the publication of our former remarks on Vancouver's Island, events have occurred which prove that we did not, at all events, overrate its importance. These events are—first, the publication of some Parliamentary papers; secondly, debates inboth Houses of Parliament.

At the beginning of last month Lord Lincoln put some questions to the Government, in the House of Commons, as to their intentions respecting the Colonisation of Vancouver's Island. The questions were, in effect, these—"Are you going to grant Vancouver's Island to the Hudson's Bay Company?" and, "Are you going to do so at a time when they are on their trial for gross mismanagement of the territories they already possess?"

The answers of Mr. Hawes and of the Prime Minister were deemed to be most unsatisfactory; so much so, that, on the 18th July, Lord Lincoln gave notice that he should move the House to address the Crown, praying that the request of the Hudson's Bay Company, to be put in possession of Vancouver's Island, might not be granted!

The very few observations which fell from his Lordship on that occasion, together with some brief but pregnant remarks from Mr. Gladstone, were received with such marked approbation by the House, that the Government did not think it wise, or, perhaps, safe, to proceed further in the matter, without giving the House of Commons the opportunity of expressing an opinion. Accordingly, on the 8th instant, a return was made to the House of a copy of "Correspondence between the Chairman of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Secretary of State for the Colonies relative to the Colonisation of Vancouver's Island."

Submitted to the House at such a time, and in such a manner, we are entitled to consider this paper as the *case* of the Colonial-office; as containing such information as they consider will justify Her Majesty's Government in recommending the Crown to grant the island to the Hudson's Bay Company. Viewing the return in this light, we shall proceed to call the attention of our readers to its contents. We shall also make some observations on the discussion which these papers provoked in Parliament.

We have first a letter from Sir J. H. Pelly to Lord Grey, dated 7th September, 1846, written on the occasion of the conclusion of the treaty by which the boundary between the British and American territory was

finally settled, requesting to know whether "the Hudson's Bay Company, having formed an establishment on the southern point of Vancouver's Island, which they were annually enlarging, would be confirmed in the possession of such lands as they might find it expedient to add to those which they already possessed." In reply to this letter, and referring to an interview with Sir J. H. Pelly, which took place in consequence, Lord Grey, on the 3rd of October, 1847, requests Sir J. H. Pelly to "move the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company to apprise his Lordship, with as much exactness as may be possible, what is the extent and what are the natural or other limits of the territory in the possession of which they [the Hudson's Bay Company] desire to be confirmed, pointing out what may be known *regarding the soil, harbours, and navigable streams comprised within it.*"

In reply to this question, Sir J. H. Pelly encloses a report by Mr. Chief Factor Douglas, who was sent to select a site for a fort, which was subsequently built on the south-eastern corner of Vancouver's Island, and is now called Fort Victoria; and also some extracts from subsequent reports, relating to the progress of the farm and settlement connected with that fort.

Sir J. H. Pelly asserts in this letter, that, besides what may be gathered from these enclosures, "the only additional information in the Company's possession will be found in the report of Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour, dated Nov. 1, 1845, addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies; and in that of Lieutenant Vavasour to Colonel Holloway, of the Royal Engineers, Canada, dated March 1, 1846."

Now, Mr. Douglas's report contains nothing more than an account of an examination of a part of the *south coast* of Vancouver's Island. His observations were chiefly directed to a survey of the several ports and harbours. Nevertheless Mr. Douglas asserts that the finest and only district of Vancouver's Island which contains any considerable extent of clear land is situated immediately on the Straits of De Fuca. This is an opinion which must be taken with great caution, as there is no evidence that Mr. Douglas's investigation extended further than to a very limited part of the coast, or that he was at all acquainted with the interior of the island; and this opinion is moreover entirely at variance with that of almost every other person who has visited the island, including many of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants.

Mr. Douglas had as little idea as any one else connected with the Company, of ever founding a Colony in the island. He was sent on a particular duty, which he seems to have performed with activity and intelligence. His object was to find a good site for a *trading fort*, with just sufficient good land in the immediate neighbourhood to afford supplies of food without much labour; and his attention was directed to a site, in respect of its advantages for a *trading depôt*, and with no other object in view.

The extracts of reports which are enclosed along with this letter, contain no information whatever as to the country, and relate exclusively to the progress of the Fort Victoria settlement, and to its fitness for the purposes for which it was founded: they have no relation whatever to the question put by Earl Grey.

Now Mr. Douglas in his report distinctly *rejects*, as of no use to the Company, all the country which he examined, with the exception of the neighbourhood of the port of Camosac, where Fort Victoria was subsequently built: so that when Sir J. H. Pelly writes to Lord Grey, "in reply to his Lordship's inquiries as to the extent and limits of the territory in the possession of which the Company desire to be confirmed, and the soil, harbours, and navigable streams comprised within it," that the Company have no "additional information" to that which is to be derived from the enclosed documents,—if this answer means anything at all, it means *this*, that all the territory, in the possession of which the Company desired to be confirmed, was the land in the immediate neighbourhood of the harbour of Camosac.

Sir J. H. Pelly refers, indeed, to the information contained in the reports of Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour; but these documents are not before the House. And here we may ask—why not? Referred to as they are by Sir J. H. Pelly—containing, as they are thus officially said to do, information by which the Government has been induced to come to a conclusion, the wisdom of which was about to be canvassed by the House of Commons—why were not these reports included in this return?

Have not the Colonial-office had experience enough, lately, of the danger of making garbled returns to the House of Commons? Be it through incapacity, or through carelessness, or through a wilful intention to mislead, the result is the same to the public interests. It is as if the Colonial-office loved to publish just enough to lead their opponents to make mistakes, and then to come down upon their heads with some new details which ought to have been furnished at first.

However, treating this return as the case of the Colonial-office—as their own defence of their opinion and conduct—we must take what it says; and we repeat, that the pith and meaning of the answer given by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Government in October, 1846, is this—"We want to be confirmed in the lands we have occupied, or 'may find it expedient to add to those we already possess,' in the immediate neighbourhood of the harbour of Camosac, and all the rest of the island is of no use to us at all."

On the 2nd of February, 1847, Lord Grey announces to the Company that "he is ready to receive and consider the draft of such a grant as the Company would desire to receive of lands belonging to the British Crown in the Oregon territory."

On the 5th of March Sir J. H. Pelly responds to this invitation in the following language:—"In reply to this communication, I beg leave to say, that, if Her Majesty's Ministers should be of opinion that the territory in question would be more conveniently governed and colonised *(as far as that may be practicable)* through the Hudson's Bay Company, the Company are willing to undertake it, and will be ready to receive a grant *of all the territories belonging to the Crown which are situated to the north and west of Rupert's Land.* The draft which I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith is framed on the supposition that Her Majesty's Government, after considering the nature and circumstances of those territories, will be of this opinion."

It is a great loss to the curiosities of literature that this draft of a grant was not included in the return; but it would be unreasonable in us to complain of this. The affectionate relations existing between the Colonial-office and the fur-dealers of Fenchurch-street—between a Free-trade Government and the worst and most worthless monopoly in the British empire—may well forbid such a disclosure. Perhaps it was not very unlike the document which is called the Charter of Charles II.—perhaps it was as boundlessly liberal, of as questionable legality: nor would it be strange if the holders of the last of the great monopolies of former times should be so agreeably surprised at finding themselves under the patronage of free-traders in office, as to fancy that the liberality of the last generation of the Stuarts to their old and faithful adherents might be equalled or surpassed by that of a Whig Government to its newly-adopted child.

The *naïveté* and modesty of the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company are really admirable. To do Sir J. H. Pelly justice, he is so far consistent. He does not want the country! He would rather not have it! He only wants the sequestered little spot—the romantic farm on the shores of Camosac. All the rest is of no use to him whatsoever.

"But, my Lord," so the Governor of the Company in effect proceeds, "if your Lordship and your colleagues should hold the original opinion that we shall govern and colonise better than any one in the world, if deeply read in the history of our corporation, knowing our bold and successful attempts to prevent the intrusion of a soul, on any pretence whatever, into our territories, without our permission and without his being subject to our control; if, being assured of our steady determination to sacrifice everything to pecuniary advantage, and that, having realised larger profits than any Company ever realised, we have done less for those by whose labours they have been accumulated, than any Company has ever yet done; if, perceiving that our interest, nay, our existence, depend on our preventing free Colonisation in any part of the territories over which our sway extends; if, knowing all this, your Lordship should still be of opinion that this country can be governed and colonised '*as far as that may be possible*' (for between you and I, this Colonisation is all a hoax), why then we will submit to our fate, and are 'ready to receive a grant of *all the territories belonging to the Crown, which are situated to the north and west of Rupert's land.*'"

This remarkable effusion, of which the above may be considered a sort of paraphrase, seems positively to have struck his Lordship dumb; for the correspondence breaks off, and is not renewed for nearly a year. The Colonial-office are absolutely speechless with amazement at the grandeur of the proposal. They are not accustomed to the large scale on which men think who make 60 or 70 per cent. on a capital augmented to nine times its original amount. At the Colonial-office they speak with respect of an island—in Fenchurch-street, a continent or a hemisphere is a mere bagatelle it would seem.

However, by the 25th of February, 1848, the Colonial-office had recovered from its surprise, and an affectionate billet-doux renews the flirtation so rudely interrupted by the demand for an outrageous jointure.

The Under-Secretary is desired by Lord Grey, with an affectionate remembrance of the old times, to "*remind*" the Chairman of the Hudson's Bay Company of his letter of the 5th of March, 1848.

We are at the same time informed that Lord Grey had, in a personal interview, acquainted the Chairman that the proposal he had made was too extensive for Her Majesty's Government to entertain. The letter proceeds thus:—"I am now directed by his Lordship to state, that if you are prepared to submit another scheme, which shall be more limited and definite in its object, and yet embrace a plan for the Colonisation and Government of Vancouver's Island, her Majesty's Government will be ready to give their immediate and attentive consideration to such proposal. Assuming that in any negotiation which may take place on this subject, the value of the coal at Vancouver's Island will necessarily form a material consideration on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company, Lord Grey directs me to send you the copy of an agreement recently entered into with Mr. Wise, from which you will learn the terms on which the Government have granted a lease to that gentleman of the coal at Labuan, and which may possibly serve as a guide in any proposal which the Company may think proper to make for working the coal at Vancouver's Island."

The first thing to be remarked in this letter is this—that the question of the coal in the island is now mentioned for the *first time* in the correspondence. And this leads us to make the observation, and it cannot be avoided, that there has been some mystery about this coal. When Sir J. H. Pelly is directly questioned by the Government as to the nature of Vancouver's Island, why does he make no mention of the coal? Did he not know of it? His servants did. Mr. Dunn's book, for example, mentions it in the year 1844, and gives an account of its having been discovered some time before, by a party in the employment of the Hudson's Bay Company. Now we ask, is this honest? That when a question so distinct is put by the Government as to the nature of the country, the Company should, in their reply, suppress all mention of that which forms the chief value of the possession they are anxious to obtain?

We are not, of course, aware, whether any mention of the coal is made in the reports of Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour (an additional instance of the absurdity of making partial returns). In case it be mentioned there, it so far clears Sir J. H. Pelly from the wilful suppression of an important fact. But, as we said at first, we must argue this case from the papers the Government have given as sufficient, and not from what they have not given. If we blunder, it is their fault, not ours. We said "wilful suppression" because it is impossible to believe that, in a company so vigorously governed as the Hudson's Bay Company, the servants should be well acquainted with a fact of this nature, and that no knowledge of it should have arrived at head quarters. Could we, indeed, believe that the Company were ignorant of the existence of the coal, the case is still worse; for it comes to this. The Government derive information from the labours of others, and then communicate it at once to the Hudson's Bay Company, telling them to take advantage of

it without delay. Now this point ought to be cleared up. Did the Company know of the coal or not? If they did, they are guilty of having suppressed the truth in answering Lord Grey's question in Mr. Hawes's letter of the 3rd October, 1846; if they did not, the Government have placed themselves in the position of availing themselves of information conveyed to them by one party to forward the interests of another party. It is just as if they had said to the Company, "You had better make some request which we can venture to grant; and that as soon as you can: there are other parties in the field, so look sharp. And it is as well you should know there are capital coals in this island, and you may make a good thing of it if you like, only you must *say* you will colonise." Divest the communication of its official garb, and that is what it comes to.

Perhaps we can hint what it was, that on the 25th of February, above all days in the year, induced the Colonial-office to press this matter again on the attention of the Hudson's Bay Company, who were under the impression, as appears from Sir J. H. Pelly's next letter, that the whole affair was at an end. There are other letters in the Colonial-office which explain how the tongue of the Secretary of State was unloosed. Perhaps some such language as the following may have had the effect:—"The Government of the United States of America has entered into a contract with a commercial house in New York, by which the latter undertake to convey the mails for a period of ten years, by means of steam vessels, between Panama and the Columbia River, and the intermediate ports of Port St. Blas, Magatelen, Acapulco, San Francisco, Monterey, &c. There are three steamers, of a thousand tons each, now building at New York for the purpose, and it is said they are to be completed in December next. In order to perform their contract a supply of from 15,000 to 20,000 tons of coal will be requisite yearly. The New York Company offer to contract with an English house for this supply of coal, to be brought from England. The Pacific Steam Navigation Company have two steamers continually running from Valparaiso to Panama, touching at all the intermediate ports. It is said that they are willing to contract for a supply of 2,000 tons of coal annually, to be landed at Panama; moreover, the supply of coal required by her Majesty's steamers in the Pacific will, probably, be continually increasing. Hence it is probable that, before long, a demand will arise for nearly 30,000 tons of coal annually in the Pacific Ocean. It is obvious that this could be supplied at a far lower cost from Vancouver's Island than from England. For a statement of the nature and capabilities of the coal in Vancouver's Island, I beg to refer you to a dispatch from Admiral Sir G. Seymour, enclosing a letter dated some time in February, 1847, from Commander Gordon, of H.M.'s steam-sloop Cormorant. It is now proposed to form a Company to work the coal mines in Vancouver's Island. It is necessary, however, in the first place, to know upon what terms her Majesty's Government will grant the right of working the coal mines. In the second place, it will be obvious to Lord Grey that an undertaking, such as that contemplated, will involve the necessity of transporting a large population of English to Vancouver's

Island. The number of seamen alone must be considerable, and the population necessary to produce food for their existence must also be numerous. Besides, it is probable that any depot for shipping in this situation would attract a considerable number of whale-ships to the island. It is plain, then, that in the event of the proposed Company being formed, Vancouver's Island will become the resort of a considerable number of Her Majesty's subjects; and that it will be essential to the comfort and convenience of the population, and to the security of the speculation, that a Government should be established in the island contemporaneously with the first formation of the Colony. It will, therefore, be very desirable to know Lord Grey's views on this point. Lastly, apart from the profit to be gained by working the coal mines, of which, from the statements here given, there seems to be a reasonable prospect, Lord Grey is aware that there are various reasons why a Colony in that part of British America is desirable. I shall not trouble you with any remarks on this head, as I have fully stated the case in a letter to Mr. Hawes, in June, 1847. It is a matter for his Lordship's consideration, whether the establishment of a Colony would not be most readily effected through the agency of such a Company as that now proposed; whether (referring to my letter of 11th June) it would not be wise to grant the whole island to such a Company, binding them by their charter to effect the Colonisation in a certain manner. I am not able at present to state who will be the principal parties in forming this Company. When the time shall arrive, I hope such names will appear as shall place the scheme above the possibility of failure. The possibility of forming a Company at all will depend, however, on the view Lord Grey may take of the above questions."

It is possible, too, that Lord Grey may have cast his eye over a letter dated February 21, containing some such language as the following:—"It is obviously of the greatest importance to know the intentions of Her Majesty's Government at the present moment, whether they are about to give the right of working this coal to the Hudson's Bay Company, or whether they are prepared to listen to the proposal of any other Company formed for the purpose specified in the enclosed circular; and, if so, upon what terms the grant will be made: or, lastly, whether it is contemplated to keep all the mines in the property of the Crown. Without having some information on these points, there is no means of knowing whether it be worth while to establish a Company or not."

The letters whence these extracts are taken were signed "James Edward Fitzgerald," and were addressed to Mr. Merivale.

The facts here mentioned could not fail to excite some attention at the Colonial-office. Accordingly, the writer received, in a few days, the following answer from the Under Secretary:—

"Downing-street, 24th February, 1848.

"Sir—I have received, and laid before Lord Grey, your letters of the 14th and 21st instant, with the enclosures, proposing the formation of a Company to work the coal and establish a Colony in Vancouver's Island, and I am directed by his Lordship to state that he will be ready to consider any practical plan which may be submitted to him for these pur-

poses, provided it be supported by parties of respectability, and possessing sufficient means to make success probable. It is not in his Lordship's power to enter into the details of any proposed scheme of Colonisation until he has received some information on these points, nor is such the ordinary practice of this office. With reference to the coal strata, however, which are reported to exist on the island, I am directed to inform you that, up to this time, no proposal for working them has been submitted to Lord Grey by the Hudson's Bay Company; and that the course recently pursued towards the undertakers of similar enterprises has been, not to grant away the property of the Crown in coal mines, but to grant leases for long terms.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) "B. HAWES."

"J. E. Fitzgerald, Esq."

Now, nothing can be more distinct than the proposal made in these letters of the 14th and 21st February. The writer says, "It is of no use trying to get up a Company unless we are able to state to the public what the terms of the Colonial-office are likely to be. We do not pretend to have capital sufficient, but we believe the scheme to be a good one, and one which will merit support amongst merchants and enterprising men; but we cannot stir a step until you will tell us whether it is worth our while to appeal to the public for this support."

Does Mr. Hawes recollect anything about the New Zealand Company? Does he remember that amusing scene, so well described by Mr. Wakefield, before a Parliamentary Committee? The interview which a party of enterprising gentlemen, who were about to emigrate to New Zealand, had with Lord Melbourne? How his Lordship pronounced that man to be mad who, he was informed, had sold his property, and was waiting till the vessels were ready to take him to New Zealand, and how one of the deputation jumped up and said he was that madman? Does Mr. Hawes remember how and why all the trouble and difficulty and disaster was brought on that enterprise? Was it not because they had taken active measures for carrying their views into operation before they had been assured of the views entertained at the Colonial-office? Does Mr. Hawes recollect that affair? Perhaps it is better he should forget it. He could not well remember it without remembering, too, that Lord Howick was then accused by the Company of having been the evil spirit who had blighted its prosperity. He could not remember it without calling to mind the attitude of hostility in which he then stood to the noble Lord under whom he is now acting.

We should not have alluded to this subject were it not that the subject upon which the present Secretary and Under-Secretary for the Colonies then differed was, so far, that upon which they are now agreed, the policy of the Colonial-office in keeping the public as much in the dark as possible as to the wishes, intentions, and principles of the Government.

But, whatever Mr. Hawes may have forgotten, the public have not forgotten, and are not likely to forget those events. They were pregnant with instruction; lessons of which the public seem more inclined to avail themselves, than the actors engaged. The public learned that, with

such an arbitrary and capricious power at the Colonial-office, it was hopeless to engage in any speculation which could be in any way affected by the will of that office, without first ascertaining distinctly what course it was likely to adopt.

Now Mr. Hawes has said in the House of Commons, on the evening of the 18th of August, that "soon after he entered the Colonial-office many parties manifested a desire to colonise Vancouver's Island. They were invited to send in their plans, but not one of those sent in was accompanied with anything like a show of security that the parties would be able to carry out the object in view. In every instance there was a desire to meet their views; but, until the Hudson's Bay Company made their offer, the communications all ended in this, that the parties all thought the island might be colonised with advantage, but that they had not the means of carrying that object into effect."

Now, what were the other communications made to the Colonial-office we do not know, but with regard to those from which extracts are given above, it is manifest, that whether there were means or not, Mr. Hawes was utterly ignorant. He was informed that certain information, which there could be no earthly object in refusing, and which, had there been any real desire to promote the Colonisation of the island, ought to have been supplied—that such information would enable a scheme to be laid before the public of a nature likely to secure its patronage. And what is the reply? Not only is no information given, but it is implied that a course of conduct would be pursued which proves to be directly the reverse of that which was afterwards taken. It is implied that the coal mines would not be granted in perpetuity, and that they would be *let* on lease; but they have not been let, *i.e. no rent* has been demanded, and they *have been, practically, granted in perpetuity*.

Whatever might otherwise have been the result, it was quite impossible that any scheme could have been put before the public with such deficiency of information as to what the Government would do. Now, Mr. Hawes talks of the Hudson's Bay Company making an offer. The Company, as it appears, from "the correspondence," did no such thing. They had no idea of making an offer for a mere kitchen-garden. They only dealt in continents. Look at the letter from the Under-Secretary of the 25th February. The Company are positively pressed to take the island, and told at the same time that there is coal to be found there. And it is worthy of remark that the reply to Mr. Fitzgerald's letters of the 14th and 21st inst. is dated on the 24th February, and the letter to the Hudson's Bay Company is sent on the following day.

No sooner did the Government receive information that there was really a prospect of a Colony being advantageously founded in Vancouver's Island, than they write off at once to apprise the Hudson's Bay Company of the fact, and to renew negotiations, which up to that time seem to have been suspended.

It is necessary to take a brief notice of the remaining "correspondence;" and, first, in reference to Mr. Hawes' expression of the "offer" made by the Hudson's Bay Company, it is very important to remark the language held by Sir J. H. Pelly. "As far as the Hudson's Bay Company

are concerned," he says, in his letter of the 4th of March, "all that they would require would be the very limited grant of lands which I had in view in my letter to your Lordship of the 7th September, 1846."

Again, in the same letter, we read—"When I understood that *you were desirous* that a part or the whole of the country recently confirmed to Great Britain should be colonised, I was induced to propose that the whole should be included in a grant to the Hudson's Bay Company, because I was persuaded that the Colonisation would be much more successfully conducted under the auspices of the Company than it could be in any other manner, as I foresaw serious difficulties should different parts of the territory be colonised under different authorities."

The tone assumed by the Governor of this Company proves that he looked with no favourable or sanguine view on the scheme of colonising the country at all. The burden of his song is simply this—"We never proposed to colonise; but if you are desirous that Colonies should be formed, you had better let us do it, rather than any one else."

Passing over the next letter from Sir J. H. Pelly to Lord Grey, marked private, in answer to a private letter from Lord Grey, which is suppressed, we come to the draft of the proposed charter.

1. This charter proposes to grant to the Hudson's Bay Company, as "true and absolute lords and proprietors," Vancouver's Island, with the fisheries, royalties, and mines royal.

2. It provides that the grant is made to the intent that the Company shall establish "a settlement or settlements of resident Colonists, Emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, *or from our other dominions*, and shall dispose of the land as may be necessary for the purpose of promoting settlements."

3. The Company is to signify to one of the Principal Secretaries of State, once in two years, "what Colonists shall have been from time to time settled in the said island, and what land shall have been disposed of."

4. It is then provided, that if there be not a settlement of resident Colonists within five years, the charter may be revoked by the Crown.

5. It reserves to the Crown the right to repurchase the island from the Company, on the payment of the sum of money expended on the island, "and of the value of their establishments, property, and effects then being thereon," if the Crown shall think proper to do so, when the Company's licence of trade expires, that is to say, 11 years from the present time.

Such, in brief, are the terms of the charter which the Government propose to make to the Company. Now, we beg to call the attention of our readers to a few remarks thereupon. In the first place, we observe that the entire property of the valuable coal mines is made over to the Company for their exclusive benefit. On the 25th of February, Lord Grey forwards to Sir J. H. Pelly a copy of an agreement recently made with Mr. Wise, from which he might learn the terms on which the Government had granted a lease to that gentleman of the coal in Labuan, and which might possibly "serve as a guide in any proposal which the Company might think proper to make for working the coal at Van-

couver's Island." Now, by the agreement made with Mr. Wise, a rent of half-a-crown a ton for all the coal raised is to be paid to the Crown, and the lessee is compelled to raise a certain quantity in a given time. So that if Mr. Hawes' letter meant anything at all; if there was any inference at all to be drawn from the transmission of this paper to Sir J. H. Pelly, it was this—"The Government will expect you to pay a rent for the coal, and to raise a certain quantity in a given time, under a considerable penalty."

Again, as we have before remarked, the language held to other parties was such as to induce the conviction that it was the intention of the Colonial-office to let the mines for a limited period only, and to require something more than a nominal rent. And what is Sir J. H. Pelly's reply to this intimation of the Colonial Minister. "On that part of Mr. Hawes' letter, in which it is assumed that the value of the coal in Vancouver's Island will form a material consideration on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company in any negotiation that may take place on this subject, I have only to observe that the Company expect no pecuniary advantage from colonising the territory in question. All moneys received for land or minerals would be applied to purposes connected with the improvement of the country, and, therefore, if the grant is to be clogged with any payment to the Mother-country, the Company would be under the necessity of declining it."

Now remark, Sir J. H. Pelly does not say that the profits are to be applied to *Colonisation*, but to purposes connected with the improvement of the country. This means literally nothing. It would remain quite a matter of opinion what Sir J. H. Pelly might esteem to be "purposes connected with the improvement of the country." The Company are bound to nothing at all by this vague assurance. Still this reasoning seemed conclusive to Earl Grey, so he determined that the Company should have the island, coals and all, and should pay only seven shillings a-year for it. Well, then, let us look at the reply of Mr. Hawes:—

"Lord Grey directs me to state that he has fully considered the contents of your letter above-mentioned, and is of opinion that it will be advisable, in the first instance, that the grant to the Hudson's Bay Company should be confined to Vancouver's Island. His Lordship will be happy to entertain any such proposal as you may think proper to submit to him for this purpose, *proceeding on the principle which you have suggested, that the Company shall not derive any pecuniary profit from the undertaking, but shall apply all funds arising from the sale of lands or minerals towards the Colonisation and improvement of the island.*"

Now, had we not the draft of the grant proposed before us, it would be difficult to believe that, after this letter from Mr. Hawes, the charter was to contain no provision of any kind whatsoever, by which the Company should be bound to expend the profits arising from the sale of the land and minerals in the Colonisation and improvement of the country. The only words in the charter which may be construed into such a provision are these:—"And shall dispose of the land there *as may be necessary* for the purpose of promoting settlements (and for the actual purpose of promoting settlements), and for the

actual purpose of Colonisation," &c. The reason assigned why the Government should depart from its usual policy, and should give the coal mines rent free to the Company, is this, that the Company intend to spend all the proceeds in Colonisation and improvements. This is the pith of the defence made by Lord Grey in the House of Lords on the 24th August. The Government says, "very well; on that condition we will agree to your terms: send us in a draft of a grant proceeding on this principle." The Company sent a draft in which the "principle" is not alluded to from the beginning to the end. The Government lay it before Parliament as a model of wise Colonial administration.

This, then, is the first thing which we object to in the proposed grant. That the profits arising from the sale of land and minerals, which ought to have been, and might have been, made available for the advancement of the Colony, for conveying labour thither, for erecting public buildings, and opening the communications throughout the island, and in all useful public works, are recklessly and wantonly thrown away on a Public Company in London, the whole course of whose policy, from the hour of their foundation until the present moment, compels us irresistibly to the belief, that the profits will never be applied to any other purpose than that of swelling the dividends of the shareholders. But it may be said the Company are distinctly bound to form a settlement or settlements, and that this will involve the expenditure of money. Now, passing over the vague and indefinite manner in which this obligation is worded, or whether the settlement of half-a-dozen servants of the Company in a farm on the island would not be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the charter—in fact, whether the little trading fort on the island at this moment is not enough—we will ask, whether it is not possible for the Company to found a settlement of some magnitude with comparatively no expense at all.

Those who are interested in this question are aware of the fact, that negotiations are now going on between the Americans and the Hudson's Bay Company, for the purchase, according to the provisions of the treaty for the settlement of the north-west boundary of all the establishments belonging to the Company which are situated to the south of the boundary line. The farms of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Association are included in this arrangement; and it is the intention of that Company, in the event of Vancouver's Island being given to the Hudson's Bay Company, to remove its whole establishments thither. If all the settlers under the Hudson's Bay Company, who are now in the Oregon Territory, south of the 49° parallel, are brought into Vancouver's Island, no doubt a settlement of *some* magnitude will be formed; one, at any rate, quite large enough to satisfy the obligation which is imposed on the Company to found "a settlement" in the island. And as the Americans are bound by the treaty to pay for all the improvements which the Company have made, the Company will have this capital in hand to start their settlement in Vancouver's Island. Hence it is manifest that there is no necessity whatever, as far as the charter is concerned, that the Company should spend a sixpence of the profits derived from the land and from the minerals in the Colonisation and improve-

ment of the island. There is nothing whatever to prevent their putting the whole of such profits into their own pockets. And if it be said that the very reason why the Hudson's Bay Company ought to have the island, is because they will be able to colonise more readily than any other Company or parties, remember this, that the same results would have occurred to whomsoever you gave the island. The Puget's Sound Company would, in all probability, have removed their establishments to Vancouver's Island, whoever were the lords of it; so that all the advantages to be derived from this arrangement might have been secured, and, at the same time, the parties into whose hands the Colonisation of the country was entrusted, might have been bound in addition to spend the proceeds of the land and minerals in immigration. But, as we said before, there is nothing to prevent the Hudson's Bay Company *giving* a considerable portion of land to the Puget's Sound Company, that is, to themselves under another name, and putting all the profits from other sources into their own pockets.

From what fell from Lord John Russell, subsequently to the debate in the House of Commons, we learn that the charter, as originally proposed, is to undergo some alteration, and that it is to be submitted to the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, with whom it will finally rest whether the grant shall be made or not. We certainly understood Lord John Russell to say that some new conditions would be added to the charter, to ensure the island being properly colonised by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was, then, with profound astonishment that we heard Lord Grey, a few nights afterwards, hold this language in the House of Lords:—"There was no intention to suspend it (the charter) in consequence of anything that had happened; but there was an intention, from the first, that before any grant should finally issue, the subject should be fully considered by the Privy Council; and if any conditions could be introduced, providing for the performance of those duties which were already imposed on the Company in their grant, it should be done."

It is impossible not to remark the discrepancy, in language and tone, between Lord John Russell and Lord Grey. However, we cannot but hope that before this reference is made to the Privy Council, some plan will be devised altogether more adapted to the object in view; and that if this grant to the Hudson's Bay Company is persisted in, it will, at any rate, be coupled with such conditions and obligations, that they will be compelled to colonise the island not nominally but really.

We think that this point should be pressed upon their Lordships' attention—that the charter should contain a distinct provision, in accordance with Sir J. H. Pelly's proposal, and with Mr. Hawes' reply; and that the Company should be specifically bound to expend, in the Colonisation and settlement of the country, at any rate some portion, if not the whole, of the profits which may be derived from the land and the minerals.

Lord Grey, in his speech in the House of Lords, stated that the land was given to the Company "as trustees for the exercise of those duties which the Government would have had to perform." "The principle that they would proceed upon was, that, having received the land in the mass

from the Government, they would sell it in retail, as it were, in small portions to settlers; and the purchase-money received from these settlers would be applied in the first instance to the necessary expenses of Colonisation." All this is well enough, if true; but what *security* is there that anything of the kind will occur. Again, Lord Grey said that the Chairman of the Hudson's Bay Company had informed him that the Company did not intend to work the mines themselves, but to let them to other parties on lease, those parties paying royalty to the Hudson's Bay Company. The Chairman of the Hudson's Bay Company may have said this to the Colonial Minister, but that gentleman holds different language elsewhere; and we confidently believe Lord Grey will find that the Company do intend to work the mines themselves, and that the mines will be so worked. Is Lord Grey aware that Sir G. Simpson was negotiating long ago with the Americans to supply them with coal on the part of the Company; and that if the negotiation did not succeed, it was from the manner in which it was conducted by the Company, and not from any disinclination to complete it?

The second point to be noticed in the proposed charter is this: the Company are required to "*dispose of the land as may be necessary* for the purpose of promoting settlements." There is no allusion made to the manner in which the land is to be disposed of. There is nothing to prevent the Hudson's Bay Company dividing the whole island amongst its own Directors. And such division would be good, we take it, in law, for even if the island be resumed again by the Crown, in consequence of the Company not having fulfilled its engagements, it is provided in the charter that such resumption will be "without prejudice" "to such dispositions as may have been made in the mean time," "of any land in the island, for the actual purposes of Colonisation and settlement, and as shall have been certified as aforesaid to one of our principal Secretaries of State"—a condition which a farm or two will be sufficient to satisfy.

It will be impossible to interpret this clause to mean, that no one can have a good title to land in the island except a resident Colonist; for if it would bear this construction, that would be of itself enough to show the absurdity of the charter, for no Colony could exist where the rights of property were so meddled with. We say, therefore, there is nothing to prevent the Company granting away the whole property on the island to any one they please—the members, for example, of their own corporation. The whole thing is left to the discretion of the Hudson's Bay Company. They are to dispose of the land *as may be necessary;* that is to say, as *they may think* necessary. There is nothing to prevent their granting all the best land in the island to themselves, under their synonyme of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Association, and then demanding an exorbitant price for the rest, from any who desire to become independent Colonists. Indeed, the first of these things there is every probability of their actually doing. The second will be a ready and legal means of carrying out the object of preventing any, but those completely under their rule, from intruding into the country.

Now, we really do want to know what has become of all the prin-

ciples of Colonisation which the gentlemen who now administer the Colonial affairs have so long and eloquently professed? Is there any truth, or is there none, in the views put forward by the founders of the New Zealand Company, for example? Are we to be harangued and written into opinions, which we are told are essential to sound Colonisation? And are the apostles and disciples of these opinions to undo, the very moment they have the opportunity, all that they have written and said? But, in the present instance, it is not only that one set of principles have been discarded, and another set adopted, but these gentlemen discard their old views and take up none other. They throw all the trouble and responsibility on the Company. In a fit of despair, at the complexities of conflicting Colonisation theories, they exclaim, with the Jewish monarch, "Vanity of vanities—all is vanity." Here, good Company! take the land—do what is necessary, and for Heaven's sake don't give us the trouble of thinking anything more about it. Surely, it was only a false and inconsistent delicacy that prevented the Government giving the whole continent to the same obliging recipients of Ministerial responsibility.

We will offer at present no further objection to what *is* in the charter, but there is something to be said about what *is not* in it. First, there is nothing about the government of the Colony in the charter. All that we know about the intended government we learn from a letter from Downing-street, dated 31st July, 1848. In this Mr. Hawes says that a commission is to be issued from the Colonial-office to a Governor appointed by the Crown, by which he would "be directed to summon an assembly, elected by the general votes of the inhabitants, to exercise, in conjunction with himself and a council, nominated in the usual manner, the powers of legislation."

Now, we do not understand this mode of making a constitution. The government is to be free, but it is to be established by a commission from the Colonial-office. We do not quite understand what is to prevent the Colonial-office recalling that commission should they at any time see fit so to do.

Now, what is the object of this? Is it anticipated that Colonists will go to so distant a part of the world, with the promise of a free constitution, which shall guard them against the oppression of a powerful Company, and yet with no security that that constitution may not be destroyed by the caprice of a Minister, or by the influence of a Company, which may, and probably will, find a free government at variance with their notions and with their interests, and whose influence at the Colonial-office the whole history of this affair shows us to be all powerful?

The present case is wholly different from that of Jamaica and of Newfoundland, cited by Lord Grey in his speech. In the present case, the Colonists are to go out under the authority of a powerful Company, which is accused of great oppression, and of interference with the free privileges of the settlers in another part of its dominions. Nothing but a free constitution can guard the Colonists from this danger; and if that constitution is to be given only on the word of the Colonial-office, which is almost completely under the influence of the very Company from whom

the evils are expected to arise, we do assert that there is no security given at all. The free constitution ought to be a part of the original charter of the Colony.

In the next place, it is not very easy to know what is meant by the *general votes* of the inhabitants. Is there to be universal suffrage, or household suffrage, or what?

Then, with regard to the administration of the law. Mr. Hawes proceeds—"Provision is already made for establishing a judicial authority, under the Act for establishing a criminal and civil jurisdiction in certain parts of North America."

Now, here it is necessary to remark that, when Mr. Gladstone alluded in his speech to the fact that a man had been executed at the Red River Settlement, Mr. Hawes made several interruptions—first, to throw doubt on the fact; but that would not do. Then, he asked—"Was it before trial?" What had that to do with it? We will inform Mr. Hawes, it was not before trial; we believe the man was tried and regularly sentenced. But what of that? If a county magistrate were to try a man and sentence him to death, and hang him, would it be a justification to say, "the man was tried." The magistrate, or the man who performed his bidding, would be tried for murder, and probably found guilty, because the magistrate has no authority according to the law to sentence a man to death.

Well, Mr. Hawes, to leave no stone unturned, again interrupted Mr. Gladstone—"It might be under Act of Parliament." It would not be very hard upon the Under-Secretary for the Colonies to expect him to *know* whether it was, or was not, under Act of Parliament.

All the authority which the Hudson's Bay Company can possibly have to inflict punishment is derived from three sources—first, their charter; secondly, the Act 43 George III., c. 138; and, thirdly, the Act 1 and 2 George IV., c. 66. The charter certainly does not give the power of life and death. The subsequent Acts tend to limit, not to increase, the power of the Company in this respect; and it was immediately shown by Mr. Gladstone that the Act 1 and 2 George IV., c. 66, so far from giving the power of life and death, particularly provides that felons are to be transmitted to the Canadian courts for trial.

Upon this digression, into which we have been led by Mr. Hawes' remark, we may make this observation with respect to the proposed provision for the execution of criminal justice in the new Colony in Vancouver's Island—viz., it is not to be wondered at that, when Mr. Hawes displays so little knowledge in the House of Commons as to the contents of the Act of Parliament, he should fancy that it will do very well what, in fact, it cannot do at all.

It is provided by the Act, which is put forward in Mr. Hawes' letter as a sufficient provision for the administration of criminal law in the island, that all felons, and all civil causes in which the property is of a greater value than £200, shall be tried in the Canadian courts; and the magistrates appointed under that Act are bound to transmit such criminals and causes to the Canadian courts for trial. So that, in the new Colony of Vancouver's Island, the Colonists are not to be allowed to try a felon themselves: the felon may not be tried by a jury of his coun-

trymen; but felon, witnesses, and all, are to be sent a three months' journey across the Rocky Mountains; of which, of course, all the expenses will have to be paid by the Colony. This will be cheap law, indeed!

The Parliament did not think it right to trust such a Company as the Hudson's Bay Company with powers of life and death; and *wisely*, as we think. That Company was carrying its operations through distant lands, and with an almost unlimited power, where no eye could watch its proceedings; and the Parliament wisely looked with jealousy upon its administration of justice, and dreaded lest its execution of the law should become the excuse for oppression. But, in the case of a free Colony, there cannot be imagined a more clumsy and childish contrivance than one which provides that no crimes, but the most trifling, shall be tried, except at a distance of more than 2,000 miles from the scene of the offence.

It is necessary that we should allude, before concluding these remarks, to the debate which took place in the House of Commons, on Friday the 18th of August, and which must exercise the most important influence on the destinies of the north-west coast of America. This debate resulted in a virtual defeat of the Ministry. For they have been compelled, at any rate, to promise that further security shall be taken from the Hudson's Bay Company before the grant shall be made. This, at least, was the promise to the Commons made by Lord John Russell. Earl Grey seemed to think that he might venture to hold different language in the House of Lords, and slurred over the question in such a manner as to leave great doubt on the public mind whether the pledge given in the Commons will be kept or not. We hope, however, this debate will rescue the new Colony from subservience to a powerful and grasping trading Company, under which it would have pined and died, had it, indeed, ever come to a birth at all. The debate has done much already: it has given a publicity to the whole question, and especially to the vast importance and deep interest which attaches to the island. It is, however, much to be regretted that the question should not have been brought before the House at an earlier period of the session. There were reasons for this. None of those who took an interest in the result of the negotiations believed that the Government would proceed to make any new grant to the Hudson's Bay Company, until the charges before them relating to the mismanagement of the Company in its own territories had been investigated and cleared up. And there was not only a general feeling on this point, but there were positive grounds for so thinking.

The country is much indebted to Mr. Christy, the member for Newcastle, for the steady and persevering manner in which he has watched the proceedings for several months. Now when there was a report that it was the intention of the Government to make this grant to the Company, Mr. Christy addressed a letter to the Colonial-office, to which the following answer was returned:—

Downing Street, April 11th, 1848.

"My Dear Sir—In reply to your note of the 4th inst., requesting to be informed whether you rightly understood me to say 'that the Government had concluded not to come to any decision on *any applica-*

tion of the Hudson's Bay Company until the report of Lord Elgin was received.' And further asking 'if it be the intention of the Government to give to Parliament the opportunity of considering this Report before any privileges are renewed or granted to the Company,' I beg to say that you understood from me, correctly, that the Government had not come to any decision, on any application of the Hudson's Bay Company, relating to the difference existing between certain settlers on the Red River and the Company, and intended to wait for the Report of Lord Elgin, and that before any decision on these questions is finally come to, Lord Grey will readily give the parties ample notice.

"Believe me, &c., &c.,

"S. Christy, Esq., M.P." (Signed) "B. HAWES."

When the printed correspondence appeared, Mr. Christy and his friends were very much surprised to find, that, at the time the above letter had been written, the Government were contemplating making the grant of Vancouver's Island to the Hudson's Bay Company. Mr. Hume read it out in the House of Commons, and Mr. Hawes replied that it had nothing to do with the question; that the promise given was that the Red River question should come before the House before it was settled and that the letter had no allusion at all to the Vancouver Island grant. Now, when we read the note carefully, we see that it is so worded that Mr. Hawes' explanation is good, so far; but Mr. Christy's question did refer to the proposed grant. Mr. Christy asks a question about one thing, and Mr. Hawes gives an answer about another thing.

This is Colonial-office policy. It has certainly been so far successful, that for some time those gentlemen in the House of Commons who had an eye on the proceedings of the Government in relation to the Hudson's Bay Company, were thrown off the scent, and were under the impression that no further grant was to be made at present. It was not until the answer to the question asked by Lord Lincoln, that it was believed that the Government really intended to make this grant.

In noticing the debate which at length took place, the speech delivered by Mr. C. Buller is of the greatest importance. It was impossible to read it without a feeling of sadness. Everything which falls from Mr. Buller, connected with the subject of Colonisation, commands, and is in general entitled to, the respect of the public. It is, therefore, with a feeling of sadness that we hear him making observations in defence of a bad cause, which proves nothing but his utter ignorance of the whole subject. It is painful to hear any one talk of what they know nothing, but still more so to hear this done by a man of Mr. Buller's authority on Colonial matters. The ignorance of most men is of no consequence; but the ignorance of men in authority is mischievous.

When Mr. Buller said that Vancouver's Island was the last spot in the world to which emigration was likely to flow, he must, in the first place, have paid very little attention to what fell from the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, who said that, "many parties manifested a desire to colonise Vancouver's Island."

But further, Mr. Buller has done on this occasion what greater men

than he sometimes do, unwisely; he has given *reasons* for his opinion. Had he given his opinion, with the weight of his authority, we might have taken it for what it is worth, and that is never a little; but Mr. Buller gives us the facts on which his opinion is founded. And they are these:—First, the voyage to the island occupies six months: secondly, the cost of emigration will be fifty pounds a man. Now, if Mr. Buller had known anything, or read anything, of late occurrences respecting this question, he would have known that as soon as the steamers begin to run from Panama to the Columbia (and we can inform him that these steamers are now in the water, and the first is to start next October), it will be possible to get from England, almost the whole way to the island, in steamers of the first class; the length of the passage across the Isthmus of Panama being only 23 miles. Arrangements having been now made by the United States for opening a communication from Chagres to Panama, for the purpose of conveying the mails for the Oregon by the steamers above-mentioned, there is more than a probability that in a short time there will be an easy mode of travelling across the Isthmus. The distance, then, so far as the means of communication are concerned, would be little more than half that to the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Of course poor emigrants could not go out in these steamers; but if the scheme for supplying the steamers with coal at Panama were carried into execution (and we can again assure Mr. Buller, that it is from no disinclination on the part of the Americans to buy the coal that that scheme is not carried out, for they are most anxious to try the Vancouver's Island coal)—if, we say, this scheme were carried out, then the vessels which bring the coal down to Panama are available to convey the emigrants back to the island: and in this case, the voyage would be much shorter than that to the Australian Colonies.

Then, again, with regard to the expense, Mr. Buller was talking wildly when he spoke of £50 per head as the cost of emigration. Mr. Wyld answered this when he said that there were many merchants in the City of London who were quite prepared to take out emigrants at the rate of £17 each. An offer has been made to take out emigrants for £20 a-head to our own knowledge. But there can be little doubt that in the event of the coal communication being opened, a still less sum would be sufficient. So much, then, for Mr. Buller's *facts* as objections to the Colonisation of Vancouver's Island.

But what possessed Mr. Buller to run a tilt against Vancouver's Island as a field for Colonisation it is impossible to comprehend. "His belief was that till they had filled the Cape of Good Hope, New Holland, and New Zealand, Vancouver's Island would be a closed field for emigrants. What was the trade of this place? Talk of its harbours! for what purpose of maritime defence, command, or trade? The whole Pacific was commanded by other harbours, by Labuan, New Zealand, and Hong-Kong. Were we to abandon our natural fields of Colonisation for Vancouver's Island? Talk of trade! What trade had we with Vancouver's Island? What produce had the island to offer us? He believed his honourable friend, the Secretary for the Colonies, had rather

depreciated the climate. His own American experience led him to believe it was one of the finest climates in the world. But with regard to the soil it was quite different. The report was that there was exceedingly little valuable land. He had never heard that there was any valuable timber, or any particular produce in that country."

It is not easy to imagine a more unfortunate exhibition of flippant ignorance than the above.

What does Mr. Buller mean by the Pacific being commanded by Labuan, Hong-Kong, and New Zealand? Neither Labuan nor Hong-Kong can, under any circumstances, become British Colonies. They may become occupied positions, like Gibraltar or Malta, but Colonies they can never be. And what has New Zealand to do with the Pacific Ocean?—with the Sandwich Islands?—with the trade which, ere long, will pass between China and the American continent?

Perhaps it has escaped Mr. Buller's knowledge (as so much seems to have done) on this topic, that there is a plan at this moment in contemplation, in the United States, for running a line of steamers from California to the coast of China? It is shown that the straight and shortest course will take the vessels close to the Aleutian or Fox Islands. Of this any one may satisfy themselves by taking a bit of cotton and stretching it on a globe from one point to the other. It is, therefore, proposed to establish a depôt of coals at the above-named islands, in the most southerly of the group: this is nearly the middle point between California and the coast of China. A glance at the map will show that the coal at this depôt may be supplied immediately from Vancouver's Island, the distance between the two being very moderate. It is undeniable that, were such a plan as that which has been proposed to the American Government adopted, the whole supply of the coal for these steamers would be drawn from Vancouver's Island. It is blindness not to foresee that the time is coming when trade will thus flow from the east of Asia immediately into the west of America. Mr. Buller might have known something of this when he said, "Talk of trade! What trade had we with Vancouver's Island?"

But, again, "the report was, there was exceedingly little valuable land." That may be the report of the Chairman of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose information and recollections are generally, it would seem, regulated somewhat by the object in view. But it is not the report of all disinterested men who know anything about the matter, and we assert it is not the report of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants generally. "He had never heard that there was any valuable timber or any particular produce in that country." It is wonderful, and providential as displaying to the public what all this language is worth, that Mr. C. Buller should have selected that for a subject of depreciation which is the peculiar and pre-eminent value of the north-west coast of America. The timber there attains a growth unknown, perhaps, in any other part of the world; so much so, that it would be difficult to credit the accounts as to the size and magnificence of the timber if all the testimonies were not unanimous on the point. But, in one kind, the timber is of remarkable value, and that is in spars for

shipping. They are said to be of a greater size and better quality here than those which any other part of the world has produced, not excepting New Zealand. There are some at this moment in Woolwich Dockyard, which were brought over, we believe, in one of the Company's ships, some years ago. There were some brought home by Her Majesty's ship America as specimens; and, if we have not been misinformed, more than one representation has been made to the Government, even by officers in Her Majesty's service, urging them to take advantage of these splendid spars, which grow close to the water's edge, and can be obtained with very little trouble along the north shores of Vancouver's Island, and of the American coast still further northward. The larger spars in ships fetch enormous prices in this country, and are difficult to obtain anywhere; and calculations have been made to show that great profits may be realised by bringing cargoes from the north-west coast. If there be any grounds for believing this *now*, when no cargo could be procured out, further than to South America, how much more would the speculation be likely to succeed, when a Colony in the island would give outward-bound ships good freights? But it is not only here that a market could be found. The Sandwich Islands require a supply for the American whale ships, numbers of which refit there between the fishing seasons. China, too, would offer a very extensive market.

Besides this, if Mr. C. Buller had asked Sir J. H. Pelly, before he made these assertions, he would have been informed that the money which has been invested in the neighbourhood of Puget's Sound in agricultural improvement has paid a good per centage to the shareholders in London. One article of export has been wool, and the experiment has proved most successful. Now, it is asserted by persons who have been on that coast, that the land in Vancouver's Island is richer than any of the land about the Puget Sound. On the subject of trade we will add, that salmon are to be caught in such abundance, there is every prospect of an extensive and lucrative trade in this article. But we should like to know, will any Colonist be allowed to fish? The fisheries are granted *to the Company* by the proposed charter. This is a most important question—will the Colonist be allowed to fish without a licence from the Company? We hope some satisfactory information will be published on this head.

But Mr. Buller asks, "Are we to abandon our natural fields of Colonisation for Vancouver's Island?" *Natural fields!* What makes them *natural?* That Mr. C. Buller has been pleased to devote his attention to them, and has left it to others to call the attention of the public to Vancouver's Island? The length of voyage to Vancouver's Island is not so great, as we have before shown, as that to the Australian Colonies. The climate is more like that of our own country; the geographical situation is such as to offer a prospect of the settlers becoming one day the *carriers* throughout the Pacific Ocean, which there is no natural or geographical prospect of any of our Australian Colonies ever becoming. The wealth of Australia being the wool trade, as the population increases this source of wealth must diminish; but, on the contrary, the wealth of Vancouver's Island depending on its position, the value

of the land must increase year by year, so that the mere buying of land now may turn out a few years hence a most profitable speculation. What is the meaning of this expression, "natural fields of Colonisation?" We say it is hard to hear a sensible man like Mr. C. Buller talk in so inconsiderate a manner, simply because he does not choose to pay attention to the subject. Even what he did say in praise of the country was ill-judged and wrong. He said the climate was good, because he had experienced the American climate to be so. Now there cannot be two climates more dissimilar than those on the opposite sides of the Rocky Mountains. The climate of Vancouver's Island is more like that of Ireland, than like that of Canada or the United States. However, we shall hand over Mr. C. Buller for a general answer to all his remarks on this head to Mr. Hawes and Lord Grey. Whatever Mr. C. Buller's opinion of the value of the island may be, the Colonial Minister does not agree with him. Indeed, Lord Grey has had the advantages of that island, as a site for a Colony, so strongly urged upon him, that he must be fully aware of its real importance.

But whatever feeling of regret we may experience that any honourable gentleman should deliver opinions without knowing anything at all of the subject, it is a still sadder thing to see an able man sacrifice his principles to his party. Mr. C. Buller is an advocate for a general and systematic scheme of Colonisation. Unlike the present Colonial Minister, he does not see any reason why such a scheme should not at this moment be adopted; he does not hesitate to declare this on the present occasion: and yet, without any assigned reason whatever, he thinks it wise and consistent to back up his party in taking a step in a direction diametrically opposite to that which all the efforts of himself and his friends have been endeavouring to show is the only one by which any advance can be made in Colonisation; and feeling, as is evident, that some apology is necessary to the House, the scene of his former lectures on the principles of Colonisation, for such gross and shameless inconsistency, he offers such an apology by resorting to the unworthy expedient of uttering some truthless and foolish statements, in depreciation of the value of the territory about to be granted. The sale of land, the importation of labour with the price of the land, the fixing the price of the land so that enough labour can be imported to till the land sold, the destructive effect of making large grants to any parties or companies, all these principles reiterated again and again are all forgotten. The uniformity of a Colonisation system throughout all our Colonies, to the attainment of which their labours were directed—this is treated as a chimera. There is a great exception raised in favour of a Company, which history proves to be the most unfit in the world to be the recipient of such favours.

Of Mr. Gladstone's speech it is unnecessary that we should say anything. No one can read it without being compelled, by an accumulative weight of testimony and argument, to the conclusion, that the Hudson's Bay Company are not the proper repository of the vast power with which they have been entrusted. Mr. Gladstone pursues their history and policy through all its details with distinctness and perseverance. He detects and exposes, in all their conduct, not a wilful and wicked

misuse of the powers entrusted to them, not arbitrary and tyrannical conduct in the government of an individual here and there, but an incapacity, arising from the very nature of their constitution, to conduct a system of Colonisation and Government with enterprise and success. Nothing, it must be admitted, could be more candid or more moderate than the tone of Mr. Gladstone's speech. The conviction left on our minds is, not so much that the Company *will not* do what they profess, as that they cannot do so: there are elements in their existence which render it extremely improbable that they will be able to keep their promises. It is not an attack upon persons, it is an exposure of a system. In the speeches of Mr. Hawes and Mr. C. Buller, and in that subsequently of Earl Grey, there is no pretence at an answer. The reply of the Colonial-office is this—The Company are going to colonise the island without any pecuniary advantage to themselves; and Major Crofton and Lord Elgin think they govern their own territories quite well enough. Now this is all a matter of opinion. The answer is, simply,—you are binding the Company under no obligation which they cannot evade if they wish it; and,—Major Crofton's and Lord Elgin's opinions differ from that of most other persons. This we may ask—Have the Colonial-office received no other opinion than that of Major Crofton? Are there no other "officers and gentlemen" who have seen the working of the Company?

Now, there have been several of Her Majesty ships on the north-west coast. The officers have seen the manner in which the Company colonise and govern. Lord Grey said that he judged of the ability of the Company to colonise, because they were going to move up the establishment at Puget's Sound to Vancouver's Island; and he instanced what great things they had done at Puget's Sound, as a proof of what they would do in Vancouver's Island. If Lord Grey had taken the trouble to inquire of some of the officers in Her Majesty's service, who have been on the north-west coast, he would have received opinions respecting the conduct and government of the Hudson's Bay Company altogether at variance with those of Colonel Crofton; and these opinions have been formed from an observation of the settlement of the Hudson's Bay Company at Puget's Sound, the very one which Lord Grey instanced as showing the capabilities of the Company to colonise.

There is another sentence in Lord Grey's speech to which we beg the particular attention of our reader; it is as follows:—"They (the Company) had, moreover, rights over this district which would be very seriously interfered with by other parties, and these rights could not be got rid of without compensation to a very large amount." What rights? They have none but the exclusive right of trade with the Indians. It is hard to believe that Lord Grey is *altogether* ignorant of the question about which he has undertaken, not to legislate, but to act without legislation. Surely, he would not make a wilful misstatement to the House of Lords. Yet did he not know that Lord Glenelg especially reserved to the Crown, in the last licence of trade, the power to *revoke the grant*, should the Crown see fit to establish a Colony, or Colonies, in the country over which it extends? and that a simple

proclamation is necessary, without one farthing compensation, to destroy all the rights of the Company in the country? Nothing, then, can be farther from the truth than the statement of Lord Grey, that these rights could not be got rid of without large compensation; and it is discreditable in the highest degree to the Minister to make a statement so utterly at variance with fact, upon a subject on which, from the arbitrary manner in which he has advised the Crown to exercise its powers, the country has a right to expect his information to be perfectly accurate, and his statements to be perfectly unquestionable.

We must recur for one moment to the part which Major Crofton plays in this affair. That Major Crofton is an "officer and a gentleman" no one will for a moment doubt, without any assurance of Mr. Hawes on the subject; nor that he will to the utmost of his ability act fairly and honourably towards all parties. This we do not doubt in the least degree; but Major Crofton must himself feel that he has been placed by the Government in a very unpleasant position. This officer has gone out to the Red River settlement in command of a body of pensioners, under a system which has been lately adopted for organising bodies of pensioners, and sending them out as Colonists under their officers; giving them land to be held under military service, which they are bound to give whenever they may be called on to do so. Major Crofton was appointed to command the pensioners sent out to the Red River under this system; but he is also appointed by the Hudson's Bay Company to be Governor of the Province. "Technically, no doubt," said Mr. Hawes, "he was Governor under the Company." *Technically!* why he receives his pay from the Company; all his expenses are paid by the Company; he does not receive a farthing from the Crown, as we are informed, except his half-pay as Major; he is appointed by the Company to be their Governor, and is dependant on the Crown for nothing except his military command; but with this appointment under the Company, if he were to throw up his command to-morrow, we do not see how his position would be materially affected. He is as really and actually an officer and a servant of the Company as Sir G. Simpson or any one else. It seems to us quite as unfair to Major Crofton as it is unjust to those who have appealed from the Company to the Crown, to place him in the position of a commissioner to inquire into the charges brought against the Company. We will venture to say that in the whole history, even of the Colonial-office, there is no instance on record of such a cruel mockery of justice as this.

A thousand subjects of her Majesty appeal from a Company under whose despotic rule they are governed. They appeal that they may be allowed to enjoy the privileges of British law and British liberty, of which they are deprived. They claim, as British subjects, the right of self-taxation; they claim the right of trade without requiring a licence from the Government; they claim the right of using the British currency; they claim a right to possess land in freehold—not to be compelled to ask leave of the Government whenever they want to sell or let their estates. There are many other rights they claim—all included in one word—British liberty.

Now, there cannot be conceived a more ingenious method by which Major Crofton's Government can be made unpopular, than that which the Colonial-office have adopted, of appointing him to investigate the charges preferred, by those over whom he is to rule, against the persons who have appointed him to rule over them. Whatever may be the fact, he cannot avoid incurring the suspicion, from all those over whom his government is to extend, of being unduly influenced in favour of those with whom his own interest has been unfortunately identified. Why, what aspect will the affair have to the Red River settlers? They will fancy that these pensioners are sent out to keep them in order; that their memorial has been considered an act of rebellion, and so that the Government have thought it wise to settle a large body of emigrant warriors among them, paid by the Company, and commanded by the Company's officer; so that all the benefits which might have been derived from the settlement of pensioners in this manner are risked, if not ruined, by the thing being done in such a way as to place the new Colonists in an attitude of hostility, and to expose them to the jealousy of the whole settlement.

We do not envy Major Crofton his command or his government, but we shall be most delighted to hear, and most ready to acknowledge, that he has filled the delicate and difficult position in which the Government have placed him, with credit to himself and benefit to the people under his rule. Nor have we any doubt that he will use his best endeavours to do so; and if he fail, it will not be his fault, but that of the clumsy and blundering policy which placed him in such a position.

Our task is now done. If we have been compelled to criticise the conduct of the Colonial-office and of the Hudson's Bay Company, it has not been, as is sometimes the case with reviewers, merely for the sake of finding fault. We have tried, as far as lies in our power, to bring fairly before the public what has been done, and to represent what might have been done, in order that that public may decide what shall be done. And now that we are in possession of the "correspondence," and have listened to the debates in both Houses of Parliament, we cannot but esteem the conduct of the Colonial-office by far the more reprehensible of the two. The Hudson's Bay Company have had this business, as far as we can judge from the public documents—for what private influence may have been at work we do not know—rather pressed upon them than conceded to their importunity. The conduct of the Colonial-office is not to be judged in reference to this question alone; this is but a type of all their actions. We are led irresistibly to ask—What is the Colonial-office doing for the country? What is the use of it? Mr. Hawes states that many parties had manifested a desire to colonise Vancouver's Island. Then there were the elements of Colonisation upon which to work. There was that without which all your commercial speculations are not worth a cress of the common. There was *the will*. It would have been the part of a wise Minister, convinced of the value of the position, and anxious for its immediate occupation, to have so wielded the elements before him as to have effected the object, which is admitted to be highly important. Was this done? Were these several parties

put in communication with one another? Was there any effort made to combine their operations—to effect that by union which could not be effected without it? Nothing of the kind. The answers of the Colonial-Office are as mysterious as those of an oracle. Their principle seems to be—say as little as possible: the least said the soonest mended. The result of their policy is, that the island has been given to a Company whose character is such, that all those who are anxious to colonise the island will, in all probability, be excluded from its limits, because they have no confidence in the Company to whom it is given.

Besides, the Colonial Minister tells them in pretty plain language, that their room would be more agreeable than their company in Vancouver's Island. In his speech in the House of Lords, he says with one breath, how essential it is to the interests of the country, that the island should be colonised, because, if not, it will be taken from us by Mormonites, or other persons, thescum of American society; and with the next breath he says, it is true there were parties anxious to go out to colonise the island, but what on earth did they pitch on Vancouver's Island for? There is Canada, there is New Holland, there is New Zealand. If they want to colonise, why can't they go there, and let the Hudson's Bay Company have Vancouver's Island in peace and quiet? Now, how will you account to the country for this? You say it is of the greatest importance some one should go out to Vancouver's Island, and when any one offers to go out you say, "Go to New Zealand—go to New Holland." We wonder his Lordship's courtesy did not suggest to him to recommend these troublesome Emigrants to go to a well-known place having the reputation of a still hotter climate.

Mr. Hawes' idea of a Colony is a purely commercial one. The Company have capital, so they can make a Colony. It is not so. There is something more than capital wanting to make a Colony. You must have *men;* men of principle and men of action. Your capital may buy you a Colony of serfs; you may pay servants to go and work for you in any part of the world. And you will find that, as interest *alone* sent them thither, for interest alone will they stay there; and, should it be their interest, they will revolt from your governance. Your capital may buy you—take care it does not—a Colony that on the first slightest disagreement will throw itself into the arms of the Americans. But no capital can buy you such a Colony as a British Minister ought to found. There must be men of education, of enterprise, of principle, of patriotism, in order to give a tone and character to the community? not devoid of the motive of self-interest, we don't expect that of any man; but not solely and sordidly influenced by it.

We have no doubt whatever that, had there been no Colonial-Office, there would have been at this moment a powerful Colony in Vancouver's Island. However, we must now contemplate the possibility of this island falling into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company. The gentlemen who rule that Corporation will forgive our saying a few words on what they may do, and ought to do, on their future duty or their future fate. If we thought that these observations would meet their eye; and, still more, if we thought that any remark of ours would be listened to in Fenchurch-street without disrespect, we would address them thus:—

Gentlemen—You have a great responsibility imposed on you. You have the power of becoming the founders of a new State, perhaps of an Empire; or of arresting for a time, for you cannot ultimately prevent, the march of mankind in their career of victory over the desolate and uncultivated parts of the earth. Whatever your conduct may have been, and, bad as it has been, we admit you have had great temptations in unrestrained power and enormous gains; it is possible that, those temptations being in a great measure removed, you may, with honour to yourselves, and with great benefit to your country, adopt a new and generous policy. Your exclusive monopoly in the fur trade you are well aware is not worth a tithe of what it once was; and, even were such the case, you cannot anticipate a renewal of your licence. It may, then, be worth your while, now, at the eleventh hour, to turn your attention to the Colonisation of the country. You will find that the first step towards making a Colony is to obtain the confidence of the public. To persuade people in this country, and especially gentlemen who are ready to go out to Colonies (and this is a class which is daily increasing), that in the Colony which it is entrusted to you to form, they will find a mild but strong Government, and wise laws and regulations, and every reasonable prospect of a return for capital and a reward for labour. The first thing, in order to gain this confidence, is, to determine on, and publish, the scheme of the manner in which you intend to convey the land to settlers. We will not trouble you with theories on this subject, nor suggest what scheme you should adopt; but we urge on you that you must adopt some definite plan. You must not give land to one person and sell it to another. You must bind yourselves to convey the land of which you are the trustees, in a uniform and advantageous manner. You must, besides, state openly, what regulations you intend to make in those matters which this proposed charter unfortunately leaves to your discretion: for example, with respect to the fur trade; with respect to coal found on an estate when sold; with respect to the right of fishing. It is in your power to make such regulations in these, and other matters, as shall make it worth the while of gentlemen of independent capital to take land in your Colony. For now nearly two centuries your sway has extended over half a continent, and as yet you have left nothing behind you in all that vast country to bear witness to your power and your riches. By the pen of the future historian of those regions your existence up to this hour will scarcely be deemed worthy of notice. You have exercised no more influence over the destinies of mankind than any one of the savage tribes who have ministered to your luxury, or toiled beneath your sway. Your emissaries have gone throughout nation and kindred, but justice and law have not attended their footsteps. The immeasurable forests have poured their wealth into your coffers, but the light of religion has never illuminated their gloom. Now a new destiny is before you. You may, if you will, place your names beside those who have devoted themselves to the noble task of stimulating and directing the enterprising genius of their fellow-countrymen—who have prolonged the existence of their nation by giving it a new life in its offspring.

It may be, that, when the Pacific shall gather its now dormant wealth into the lap of those whose perseverance, skill, and daring enterprise,

shall call its resources into life, reducing to the service of man the forests and prairies of its American shores—when the voice of the ocean's waves, no longer echoed by the silent rocks, shall be repeated by the busy murmurings of human life—when the steam-vessel shall foam along the path where the canoe now glides, and the wharf and the palace shall supplant the wigwam and the pine tree—it may be told, at such a time, that your Corporation, guided by a wisdom which enabled it to meet every emergency, changing its policy with the changing spirit of the age, forgetting its ancient exclusiveness in the consciousness of new responsibility, refreshing its energy with the increasing demands of society—it may be told that you established upon these now remote shores, the fathers of a great empire, and that by a wise and generous policy you guided their youthful energies.

This is what you may do; but, should you neglect to fulfil these high duties which have been allotted to you, do not fancy that you can frustrate the expectations, the necessities of the future. You may retard, you cannot prevent; others will fulfil what you neglect. The destinies of man will be accomplished—to go forth and replenish the earth. The car of society will roll on; you may help to drag it if you will—you may direct its course, but stay its progress you cannot; linger in its path, and it will crush you to atoms.

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